

NARRATOR: Matlack, Dale
INTERVIEWER: Troy Reeves
DATE: June 26, 2000
LOCATION: Boise, Idaho
PROJECT: Smokejumpers/Forest Fire Fighters

Tape

Counter	Summary
000	Introduction.
010	Matlack offered information about his early years.
020	Living in Colorado spurred his interest in the outdoors and forestry.
025	Matlack started fighting fire in 1952. He worked at Yellowstone National Park and project skyfire. He got a degree in forestry from Colorado A & M, which is now Colorado State University.
050	Matlack's classes offered him mostly practical information that he could use during his career in the forest service. In the summers while in college he worked for the government fighting fire.
080	After graduation Matlack served in the United States Air Force and trained to be a pilot. His first forest service full-time job after leaving the Air Force was as a forester on the Pike National Forest in Colorado.
110	Matlack fought on some project fires during his time on the Pike National Forest; he fought a fire in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Matlack's next job was as a forest air officer on the Black Hills. Matlack described what his job duties were as a forest air officer.
145	One duty for Matlack was flying lead plane. Lead plane helped other planes that dropped retardant on forest fires. Matlack described the different types of retardant used on fires.
195	Matlack explained the reasons why flying planes over fires created a dangerous job. Matlack furnished an example of the dangers of flying lead plane in a fire. He talked about a fire near Corn Creek in the Salmon National Forest.
270	Dropping retardant, during Matlack's time, was based on the type of fire, the type of terrain, and the type of retardant.
300	During non-fire season Matlack trained, planned, analyzed, and built recreational facilities. The fire season lasted from June through October.

- 325 Matlack felt a conflict between being a forester and being a pilot. In the Forest Service the two positions were different grade and pay. From the Black Hills, Matlack moved to Sundance, Wyoming, as an assistant ranger. He still flew as an assistant ranger; he was called as a pilot on many project fires in various forests during the summer.
- 385 Matlack rejoined the military to build his flying credentials. He served in the United States Coast Guard for three years. Matlack explained his duties while service in the Coast Guard.
- 420 Matlack returned to the forest service in 1967. He flew the infrared mapping airplane, which was located in Boise, Idaho. Matlack described how this airplane's equipment helped to fight fire.
- 485 **END OF SIDE ONE**
TAPE ONE SIDE TWO
- 005 The infrared information needed an interpreter to explain the information to the ground crews. Matlack explained the reasons why interpreters where needed, how the information was transported to the ground crew, and how many people flew in the infrared mapping plane on a flight.
- 025 Matlack initially worked for the western zone air unit in Boise, Idaho. He explained the workings of this group, and he described the beginnings of the Boise Intragency Fire Center.
- 055 Matlack flew many different airplanes on many different jobs during his four years in Boise, Idaho. Matlack explained the similarities and differences in the different uses for an airplane during his time in Boise.
- 110 Fatigue was a problem for pilots. Matlack talked about fatigue, particularly flying the infrared mapping planes in the summer. Matlack could, in the summer, map six or seven different fires during one flying period.
- 140 In 1971 Matlack moved to Odgen, Utah, to served as the aviation safety officer for the forest service. Matlack described what he did as the aviation safety officer. Being a pilot was instrumental in doing this job.
- 180 Matlack became the regional aviation officer for the same region. He described the difference in this job from the aviation safety officer. Matlack still flew, but he flew much less than his other jobs.
- 200 In 1981 Matlack became the aerial attack system specialist for the national office. He served in Boise at the National Intragency Fire Center. He described what his job duties were in this position. He also offered his

opinions about the differences in working in a regional office and a national office.

245 Matlack was the first aerial attack specialist. He talked about doing a job that no one had done before him. Matlack thought this job was very rewarding, because he could see the results of his directives.

285 In 1986 Matlack moved to Washington, D.C., as the national aviation safety officer. Matlack spoke about his frustrations at this job.

335 Matlack had many jobs where he was the first or only person in the country doing the job. He talked about the uniqueness of this fact and about how he handled these new or unique jobs.

365 Matlack retired in 1988. After retirement he has helped with a dozen accident investigations for the Forest Service. He described what he did in these investigations.

395 Matlack last flew in 1985. He did miss it sometimes, but he was very busy with other things.

420 Matlack has made many friends in his life both inside and outside of the forest service. Matlack and his wife are involved in the forest service retirees group.

460 Matlack talked about what job he enjoyed the most while in the forest service. He liked the aerial attack specialist job because he could make changes.

495 **END OF SIDE TWO**
END OF INTERVIEW

NAMES AND PLACES INDEX

Black Hills, South Dakota
Boise, Idaho
Bureau of Land Management
Colorado A&M (Colorado State University)
Colorado Springs, Colorado
Corn Creek (Idaho)
Kodiak, Alaska
National Interagency Fire Center (Boise, Idaho)
Odgen, Utah
Pike National Forest (Colorado)
Port Angeles, Washington
Salmon National Forest
Sundance, Wyoming
United States Air Force
United States Coast Guard
Washington, D.C.
West Yellowstone, Montana
Western Zone Aerial Unit (Boise, Idaho)
Wheatridge, Colorado